The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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EARLY LOVE.

"How good it is to close with Christ betimes!"
— Oliver Cromwell.

With sin I would not make abode
While shines each Golden Hour;
Nor keep away from Thee, my God,
Till falls my Blissful Bower.

I would not give the world my heart,
And then profess Thy love;
I would not feel my strength depart,
And then Thy service prove.

I would not with swift-wingèd zeal
On the world's errands go,
And labor up the Heavenly Hill
With weary feet and slow.

Why should I lend the world's poor song
These glowing lips of mine,
And keep my dull, untunèd tongue
To sing Thy songs divine?

Oh, not for Thee my weak desires,
My poorer, baser part!
Oh, not for Thee my fading fires,
The ashes of my heart!

Lord, in the fulness of my might
I would for Thee be strong;
While runneth o'er each dear delight,
To Thee should soar my song.

Oh, choose me in my golden time!
In my dear joys have part!
For Thee the glory of my prime,
The fulness of my heart!

I cannot, Lord, too early take
The covenant divine;
Oh, ne'er the happy heart may break
Whose earliest love was Thine!

— T. H. Gill.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SPIRITUAL HARVEST.

Gal. vi. 7, 8,—"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

There are two kinds of good possible to men,—one enjoyed by our animal being, the other felt and appreciated by our spirits. Every man understands, more or less, the difference between these two,—between prosperity and well-doing, between indulgence and nobleness, between comfort and inward peace, between pleasure and striving after perfection, between happiness and blessedness. These are two kinds of harvest, and the labor necessary for them respectively is of very different kinds. The labor which procures the harvest of the one has no tendency to secure the other. We will not depreciate the advantages of this world. It is foolish and unreal to do so. Comfort, affluence, success, freedom from care, rank, station,—these are in their way real goods: only the labor bestowed upon them does not procure one single blessing that is spiritual.

On the other hand, the seed which is sown for a spiritual harvest has no tendency whatever to procure temporal well-being. Let us see what are the laws of the sowing and reaping in this department.

Christ has declared them: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (with righteousness). "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." You observe the beatific vision of the Almighty,—fulness of righteousness, comfort. There is nothing earthly,—spiritual results for spiritual labor. It is not said that the pure in heart shall be made rich, nor that they who hunger after goodness shall be filled with bread, nor that they who mourn shall rise in life and obtain distinction. Each department has its own appropriate harvest, reserved exclusively to its own method of sowing. Everything in this world has its price; and the price buys that, not something else. Every harvest demands its own preparation, and that preparation will not produce another sort of harvest. Thus, for example, you cannot have at once the soldier's renown and the quiet of a recluse's life. The soldier pays his price for his glory,—sows and reaps. His price is risk of life and limb,—nights spent on the hard ground, a weather-beaten constitution. If you will not pay that price, you cannot have what he has,—military reputation. You cannot enjoy the statesman's influence together with freedom from public notoriety. If you sensitively shrink from that, you must give up influence, or else pay his price,—the price of a thorny pillow, unrest, the chance of being to-day a nation's idol, to-morrow the people's execration. You cannot have the store of information possessed by the student, and enjoy robust health. Pay his price, and you have his reward. His price is an emaciated frame, a debilitated constitution, a transparent hand, and the rose taken out of the sunken cheek. To have these opposite things — a soldier's glory and quiet, a stateman's renown and peace, the student's prize and rude health—would be to mock God, to reap what has not been sowed. Now the mistakes men make, and the extravagant expectation in which they indulge, are these: they sow for earth, and expect to win spiritual blessings; or they sow to the spirit, and then wonder that they have not a harvest of the good things of earth. In each case they complain, What have I done to be treated so?

The unreasonableness of all this appears the moment we have understood the conditions contained in this principle, "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap."

It is a common thing to hear sentimental wonderings about the unfairness of the distribution of things here. The unprincipled get on in life: the saints are kept back. The riches and rewards of life fall to the lot of the undeserving. The rich man has his good things, and Lazarus his evil things. Whereupon it is taken for granted that there must be a future life to make this fair; that, if there were none, the constitution of this world would be unjust. That is, that, because a man who has sown to the spirit does not reap to the flesh here, he will hereafter; that the need of well-doing must be somewhere in the universe, the same kind of recompense which the rewards of the unprincipled were here,—comfort, abundance, physical enjoyment,—or else all is wrong.

But, if you look into it, the balance is perfectly adjusted even here. God has made his world much better than you and I could make it. Everything reaps its own harvest, every act has its own reward. And, before you covet the enjoyment which another possesses, you must first calculate the cost at which it was procured.

For instance, the religious tradesman complains that his honesty is a hindrance to his success, that the tide of custom pours into the doors of his less scrupulous neighbors in the same street, while he himself waits for hours, idle. My brother, do you think that God is going to reward honor, integrity, high-mindedness, with this world's coin? Do you fancy that he will pay spiritual excellence with plenty of custom? Now consider the price that man has paid for his success. Perhaps mental degradation and inward dishonor. His advertisements are all deceptive, his treatment of his workmen tyrannical, his cheap prices made possible by inferior articles. Sow that man's seed, and you will reap that man's harvest. Cheat, lie, advertise, be unscrupulous in your assertions, custom will come to you. But, if the price is too dear, let him have his harvest, and take yours. Yours is a clear conscience, a pure mind, rectitude within and without. Will you part with that for his? Then why do

you complain? He has paid his price: you do not choose to pay it. Again, it is not an uncommon thing to see a man rise from insignificance to sudden wealth, by speculation. Within the last ten or twenty years, England has gazed on many such a phenomenon. In this case, as in spiritual things, the law seems to hold. "He that hath, to him shall be given." Tens of thousands soon increase and multiply to hundreds of thousands. His doors are besieged by the rich and great. Royalty banquets at his table, and nobles court his alliance.

Whereupon some simple Christian is inclined to complain. "How strange that so much prosperity should be the lot of mere cleverness!"

Well, are these really God's chief blessings? Is it for such as these you serve him? And would these, indeed, satisfy your soul? Would you have God reward his saintliest with these gauds and gewgaws,—all this trash, rank, and wealth, and equipages and plate, and courtship from the needy great? Call you that the heaven of the holy? Compute now what was paid for that. The price that merchant prince paid, perhaps with the blood of his own soul, was shame and guilt. The price he is paying now is perpetual dread of detection, or, worse still, the hardness which can laugh at detection; or one deep lower yet, the low and grovelling soul which can be satisfied with these things as a paradise, and ask no higher. He has reaped enjoyment,—yes, and he has sown, too, the seed of infamy. It is all fair. Count the cost. "He that saveth his life shall lose it." Save your life, if you like; but do not complain if you lose your nobler life,—yourself. Win the whole world, but remember you do it by losing your own soul. Every sin must be paid for. Every sensual indulgence is a harvest, the price for which is so much ruin for the soul. "God is not mocked."

Once more, religious men in every profession are surprised to find that many of its avenues are closed to them. The conscientious churchman complains that his delicate scruples or his bold truthfulness stand in the way of his preferment; while another man, who conquers his scruples or softens the eye of truth, rises, and sits down a mitred peer in Parliament. The honorable lawyer feels that his practice is limited, while the unprincipled practitioner receives all he loses; and the Christian physician feels sore and sad at perceiving that charlatanism succeeds in winning employment, or, if not charlatanism, at least that affability and courtly manners take the place that is due to superior knowledge. Let such men take comfort, and judge fairly. Popularity is one of the things of an earthly harvest, for which quite earthly qualifications are required. I say not always dishonorable qualifications, but a certain flexibility of disposition, a certain courtly willingness to sink obnoxious truths and adapt ourselves to the prejudices of the minds of others, a certain adroitness at catching the tone of those with whom we are.

Without some of these things no man can be popular in any profession. But you have resolved to be a liver, a doer, a champion of the truth. Your ambition is to be pure in the last recesses of the mind. You have your reward,—a soul upright and manly; a fearless bearing, that dreads to look no man in the face; a willingness to let men search you through and through, and defy them to see any difference between what you seem and what you are. Now your price,—your price is dislike. The price of being true is the cross. The warrior of the truth must not expect success. What have you to do with popularity? Sow for it, and you will have it. But, if you wish for it or wish for peace, you have mistaken your calling: you must not be a teacher of the truth; you must not cut prejudice against the grain; you must leave medical, legal, theological truth to harder and nobler men, who are willing to take the martyr's cross and win the martyr's crown. This is the mistake men make. They expect both harvests, paying only one price. They would be blessed with goodness and prosperity at once. They would have that on which they bestowed no labor. They take sinful pleasure, and think it very hard that they must pay for it in agony and, worse than agony, souls deteriorated. They would monopolize heaven in their souls, and the world's prizes at the same time. This is to expect to come back, like Joseph's brethren from the land of plenty, with the corn in their sacks, and the money returned, too, in their sacks' mouths. No, no, it will not do. "Be not

deceived; God is not mocked." Reap *what* you have sown. If you sow the wind, do not complain if your harvest is the whirlwind. If you sow to the Spirit, be content with a spiritual reward,—invisible, within, more life and higher life.— *F. W. Robertson.*

THE STILL HOUR.

Thou, O Elder Brother, who
In thy flesh our trial knew,
Thou, who hast been touched by these
Our most sad infirmities,
Thou alone the gulf canst span
In the dual heart of man,
And between the soul and sense
Reconcile all difference,
Change the dream of me and mine
For the truth of Thee and Thine,
And, through chaos, doubt, and strife,
Interfuse Thy calm of life.
Some sweet morning yet in God's
Dim, æonian periods,
Joyful I shall wait to see
Those I love, who rest in Thee,
And to them in Thee allied
Shall my soul be satisfied.

Scarcely Hope hath shaped for me
What the future life may be.
Other lips may well be bold:
Like the publican of old,
I can only urge the plea,
"Lord, be merciful to me!"
Nothing of desert I claim.
Unto me belongeth shame.
Not for me the crowns of gold,
Palms, and harpings manifold;
Not for erring eye and feet,
Jasper wall and golden street.
What Thou wilt, O Father, give!
All is gain that I receive.
If my voice I may not raise
In the elders' song of praise,
If I may not, sin-defiled,
Claim my birthright as a child,
Suffer it that I to Thee
As an hired servant be.
Let the lowliest task be mine,
Grateful, so the work be Thine;
Let me find the humblest place
In the shadow of Thy grace;
Blest to me were any spot
Where temptation whispers not.
If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on;
If a blinder soul there be,
Let me guide him nearer Thee.
Make my mortal dreams come true
With the work I fain would do;
Clothe with life the weak intent
Let me be the thing I meant;
Let me find in Thy employ
Peace that dearer is than joy;
Out of self to love be led
And to heaven acclimated,
Until all things sweet and good
Seem my natural habitude.
— *Whittier: "Andrew Rykman's Prayer."*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.*]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address Mrs. C. W. Kettell, 19 Brewster Street, Cambridge, Mass. Old correspondents will please address the members to whom they have formerly written. In order to receive books from the Cambridge Branch, it will be necessary henceforth to send a reference with the *first* request.

Religious.

Noyes's "Translation of the Prophets and the New Testament"; Eliot's "Lectures to Young Women"; Sears's "Sermons and Songs"; J. F. Clarke's "Christian Doctrine of Prayer"; Blaikie's "Bible History"; Bulfinch's "Studies in the Evidences of Christianity"; "Life and Epistles of Saint Paul," Conybeare and Howson; "Bible Lore," J. Comper Gray; "The Christ of History," J. Young; "Primary Truths of Religion," Bishop Clark; Faber's "Hymns"; "The Changed Cross"; "Counsels to Sunday-school Teachers."

Juvenile.

"Jo's Boys," Louisa M. Alcott; "Cyrus the Great"; "Poetry for Home and School"; Kingsley's "Water Babies"; "A Boy's Ideal,—Life of Sir Thomas More"; "An American Hero,— William Lloyd Garrison"; "Tom Brown's School-days"; "The Old Picture Bible"; "The Jordan and the Valley of the Dead Sea"; "Manners and

Customs of the Jews"; Greenwood's "Sermons for Children"; "Seven Little Sisters who live on the Round Ball"; "Boys of '61"; "Winning his Way"; "Modern Explorers"; "Around the Yule-log"; "Zigzag Journeys in Classic Lands."

Miscellaneous.

"Story of Francis Cludde," Weyman; "Ten Nights in a Bar-room"; Scott's "Marmion"; Emerson's "Representative Men"; Ruskin's "Sesame and Lilies"; Tennyson's "In Memoriam"; Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus"; Irving's "Knickerbocker's History of New York"; E. B. Browning's "Poems"; Hosmer's "Short History of German Literature"; Hillard's "Six Months in Italy"; "Homœopathic Domestic Physician"; "Life of Dorothea Dix"; "Romola"; "Fort Frayne"; "Mother Goose for Grown Folks."

The Brattleboro Branch offers the following books. Address Mrs. G. E. Foster, 24 Canal Street, Brattleboro, Vermont. "Underground Russia," Stepniak; "Allan Quatermain," Rider Haggard; "The Story of Ida," F. Alexander; "Harvest," John Strange Winter; *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1898; *Cosmopolitan*, 1897; *Black Cat*, 1898; *Cheerful Letter*, October and November, 1898; some odd numbers of magazines

The following books are offered by Miss A. E. Howard, 108 Harvard Street, Brookline, Mass: Bradbury's "Elementary Algebra"; Cooley's "Natural Philosophy"; Franklin's "Arithmetic"; Haven's "Rhetoric"; Gray's "Botany"; "First German Book"; Adler's "Latin Grammar"; Wentworth's "Algebra"; "Preparatory French Reader."

The Brighton Branch offers the following books: "History of a Crime," Victor Hugo; "The White Company," A. Conan Doyle; "Our Cousin Veronica," Mary E. Wormeley; "A Broken Blossom"; "Cecil Castlemain's Gage."

Magazines.

Youth's Companion, 1892; *Home Journal*, 1894–95; *McClure*, 1898 (six months); *Atlantic Monthly*, 1869 (six months); *The Silver Cross*, 1894–96 (odd numbers); *Every Other Sunday* (children's paper), odd numbers. Address Carrie L. Murdock, corner Washington and Allston Streets, Brighton, Mass.

Any one desiring instruction in English composition, English literature, and algebra, may receive such help as can be given by correspondence on application to Miss Clara W. Allen, 33 Harris Street, Waltham, Mass.

Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., offers a copy of the Psalms in large print.

Miss Cora H. Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass., offers: "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush"; "The Pleasures of Life," Lubbock; "Masterman Ready"; "A Flatiron for a Farthing," Mrs. Ewing; Hawthorne's "Snow Image"; "The King of the Golden River" (fairy tale by Ruskin); "A Little Pilgrim," Mrs. Oliphant; "Uncle Max"; "Esther"; "Mary St. John"; the last three by Rosa N. Carey.

The King's Chapel Branch offers the following books. Address Miss Dorothy Amory, 278 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. "Sailor Boys of '61"; "Sailor Life on Man-of-war and Merchant Vessel"; "Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates"; "The Invisible Empire, a Story of Reconstruction in the South"; "Nada, the Lily," by H. Rider Haggard; "London," by Walter Besant; "Henry Esmond"; "Dr. Jacob"; "The Widow Samport"; "Folk and Fairy Tales"; "Sir Roger de Coverley," with notes; "Golden Songs of Great Poets"; "The Home Affections," by the poets; "The Skeleton in Armor"; "Poems of Martin Tupper"; Bryant's "Poems"; Rogers's "Poetical Works"; "Gertrude of Wyoming," poem by T. Campbell; "Wonders of Plant Life"; "Forest Pictures in the Adirondacks"; "How to Ride"; "Things Seen," by Victor Hugo; "The Isle of Palms" (boys' book); "The Parasite," Conan Doyle; "Little Susy's Six Teachers"; "Young Folks' History of England," Miss Yonge; Warren's "Physical Geography"; Mitchell's "Ancient Atlas"; Appleton's "Handbook of American Travel"; "Dictionary of Congress"; "New Physiognomy, or Signs of Character"; Worcester's "School Dictionary"; Worcester's "Pronouncing Spelling-book"; Ganot's "Physics"; Harkness's "Latin Grammar"; Cæsar's "Gallic War"; "Electro Telegraphy"; "Roasting of Gold and Silver Ores"; "Gas Engineer's Man-

ual"; "History of Germany"; "Studies in German Literature"; Beraut's "German Reader"; Grimm's "Tales," in German; "Stories for Children," in German; Collar's Eysenbach's "German Grammar"; "Grammaire Française"; Chardenal's "Second French Course"; Supris's "Readings from French History," in French; "Récits d'Histoire de France"; "L'Éducation des Filles," par Fénelon; "Les Douze Mois" (Catholic devotional book); "Map of Paris," "Atlas," "Arithmetic," in French; "Une Saison à Cannes en Provence"; "Souvenirs de Mt. Blanc" (pictures); "Contes de Fées"; "Latin Grammar in Spanish"; "Compendio Mayor de Gramatica Castellana"; "Tratado de Hibanidad"; "Sunshine in the Soul" (religious poems); "A Threefold Cord"; "Four Happy Days"; "Life in Palestine when Jesus lived" (helpful to Sunday-school teachers); "Letter to Rev. T. T. Carter by Rev. J. T. Wilkinson"; "Catechism of English Grammar."

The following books are offered by the Springfield Branch. Address Miss E. Bangs, 30 High Street, Springfield, Mass. *Youth's Companion*, regularly; "Ten Times One is Ten," by E. E. Hale; "My Long Life," by Mary Cowden Clarke; "Life of Maria Mitchell"; "American Wives and English Husbands," by Gertrude Atherton; "In a Club Corner," by A. P. Russell; "Hitherto," by Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney; "Marcella" (2 vols.), by Mrs. Humphry Ward; "Boots and Saddles," by E. B. Custer; "Miss Brooks," by Eliza Orne White; "Little Prudy's Sister Susy," by Sophie May; "Days of Auld Lang Syne," by Ian Maclaren.

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Standing requests for libraries from: —

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Mrs. Margaret Ogilvie, "The Bonnie Briars," Grand Junction, Colorado. Mrs. Ogilvie is struggling to place in each school in her county, where the school committee will furnish a bookcase, a collection of good books. She has already supplied several schools, but there are three or four more in which she is particularly interested.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.)

Mrs. Ellen Harrington, Polkton, North Carolina, asks for reading. She will pass it on to others.

I so much desire "A Noble Life" and "A Life for a Life." I think both are by Miss Mulock. I would also be glad of the *Ladies' Home Journal* for 1899 if any one will send it to me after reading. I faithfully "pass on" all reading sent me, and only regret I have so little to give; for I do so dislike to refuse any one a book or paper. Custer is a small mining town, and now practically dead; but the people cannot get away, and, as there is no work, of course there is much idleness. So I like books to lend to the men and boys. Mrs. H. J. Orr, Custer, South Dakota.

Miss Mary L. High, Cedar Hill, North Carolina, asks for a Webster's Dictionary and other reading. She is seventeen years of age, lives in the country, and cannot buy reading.

I feel very thankful to all who have sent me reading, as I am not well and can do little. So many have sent me reading and gave no name or address that I can only thank them in this way. Any reading for myself or my little boy of seven would be very acceptable. I wish most of all for a "Physical Geography." Mrs. Laura Henderson, Chelsea, Indian Territory.

I want to tell you how much good your reading has done me, and thank you for it. I take pleasure in lending it to others. Some one sent me a copy of *Harper's Bazar* (Dec. 11, 1897). I would like to have the

others that have the story "The Red Bridge Neighborhood," by Pool. I should also be glad to receive the *Ladies' Home Journal* after reading. I am an invalid. Mrs. W. C. Murphy, Chester Hill, Ohio.

Mr. Thomas Lockhard, Box 151, Wellington, Missouri, has been confined to bed by rheumatism for twelve years. He would be glad to receive reading, especially stories of adventure.

I should be glad to receive the following numbers of the *Puritan*,—January, February, and March, 1897, July and November, 1898,—also the October number of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. I have greatly enjoyed the reading sent me, and am more thankful than words can express. Mrs. A. C. Earle, Marengo, Ohio.

Magazines or other good reading are asked for by Mrs. Mary Pindar, Fulton, Ohio.

I have not received anything for some months, and should be so glad of a little reading (German) for myself and some English reading for my little girl. Mrs. D. Vietzen, Olympia, Wash.

Mrs. P. B. Rucker; Forks of Buffalo, Amherst County, Virginia, asks for instructive books and other reading for her little girl.

Mrs. Mattie Alger, Melrose, Idaho, would be glad to receive reading for herself and picture-books for her children.

I would be very glad to get something to read. I have a little boy six and a baby girl not yet two. There is no school nearer than five miles, and no church in winter. My little boy is just beginning to read, so I should be glad of something interesting for him. Mrs. W. C. Burton, Ryan, Indian Territory.

Mrs. Hattie D. Wood, Durwood, Indian Territory, asks for reading for herself and picture-books for the children.

Mrs. Sallie B. Jones, Cabool, Missouri, asks for *Munsey* after it is read.

Will those who have daily mails pause for a moment to consider this picture?

It is that of the mail-carrier speeding from one post-office to the other over the lonely miles. The "Reservation" is like a sea, full of immense waves, green in spring, tawny yellow at other times, save, as this evening, when it is dazzling white. Think what a glad day it is when the mail arrives after long intervals, bringing letters from dear friends and magazines and books from unknown, kind hearts. They may be a year old; but, so long as they are good, we are thankful. A post-office has been established here. I have been appointed postmaster, and now we hope (weather permitting) to get mail more regularly. Will the friends who have the first-class magazines for 1898 be willing to send them,—I mean, of course, when they do not care to keep them,—also the *Youth's Companion* or *good* novels? I will take pleasure in loaning, as I always do, to others.

We hope in a few years to be able to buy our reading matter; but, beginning with scarcely anything, it has been, and will be, a struggle to "make ends meet," and we do *hunger* so for fresh reading. I have thanked all whose address I knew. Let me also thank the unknown. Address Mrs. M. S. Sibley, Manila, Sterling County, South Dakota.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

Contributions to this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.

THE CHILDREN'S GOSPEL.

I listened, not long ago, to a brilliant discussion as to whether ethics should be taught in the public schools; and, while I listened, it came home to me very strongly that each one of us is, whether we will or no, a teacher of ethics during every moment of our waking lives, and, above all, in our relations with our children.

It is not what we exhort them to be, but what we ourselves are, that really influences their character. Of what use to say, "Be sincere, be truthful," if, for instance, the child to whom we speak heard us receive a visitor with a cordial, "How glad I am to see you!" and sees us listen to her with smiling attention, and then hears us say, after our door has closed behind the departing guest: "Oh, what a bore that woman is! I'm glad that infliction's over with!" To preach sincerity while we act falsely, surely

it were better not to preach at all than to mock thus at our own "counsel of perfection."

Again, of what use is it to say that the gains of this transitory world are dross, and that it is not what we have, but what we are, which is of real moment, if the childish eyes that watch us so constantly and so keenly perceive that we are more disturbed by a fall in stocks or a failure to receive an invitation to a fashionable party than by some real fault of character, some violation of forbearance, of justice in ourselves? Put on what deft disguises we may, the thing we *are* is apparent to the young eyes that watch us so unceasingly.

I think my first real lesson in the true spirit of human brotherhood came from a lady who went long ago to her reward, and on whose grave the grass of many a year has grown. It was before people had begun to talk of Tolstoï, and when "slumming" was not yet a favorite amusement. I lived in a country village, which has since then become a fashionable centre, but which was at that time as primitive as the neighborhoods of which Mary Wilkins writes. There were no factories in the place, no crowded tenements, no starving poor, but there was a certain amount of poverty and of ignorance; and there was in this place a lady,— the richest lady in all the county, so I heard people say,—and I watched her comings and goings with a sort of romantic eagerness.

She used to drive about all over the big, sparsely settled township in a little open wagon; and in that wagon were books for children who had no home libraries, dainties for sick people, toys for fretful babies whose mothers had their own housework to do. And this rich lady—who seemed to my childish eyes a sort of goddess of good fortune—never indulged herself in any luxury. Fashion was for her as if it did not exist. She wore a simple cotton gown in summer, and an equally simple woollen one in winter; and she went on her errands of mercy with a sun-bonnet shading her sweet face from the hot suns of June or a warm hood protecting her ears from the blasts of January.

I don't know that I ever said to myself, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"; but I surely felt it. One day I was sent to her house on some slight commission for my mother. She was out, as usual; but her housekeeper, discerning, I suppose, in my face something of the reverence with which I regarded her mistress, asked me suddenly, "Do you want to see where she prays?" and thereupon opened the door of a dark room, almost as austerely simple as a monk's, and pointed to a couch where I could see the impression left by a head bowed many a time and oft in secret prayer. "There," she said, "there's where she kneels." Just then the housekeeper was called away for a moment; and shyly, and almost as if it were a sacrilege I was committing, I knelt in the spot where the "lady of heaven," as I called her in my thoughts, was wont to pray, and put my childish head for one little moment in the place where hers had rested, and said a hurried prayer that I also might, with God's help, walk in the holy way she trod. I had been taken to church all my life, I had heard prayers enough and sermons enough; but I do not remember that any one of them had ever moved me to a single thrill of spiritual longing and aspiration such as I experienced in that hushed room where *she* was wont to kneel, whose daily life seemed to me more sacred than prayer or sermon.

Even in the things that belong to this life only, example is worth more than all the precept in the world. If our own behavior is rude or careless, how shall we enforce courtesy? If our own grammar is faulty, Lindley Murray will be of no avail in our household. I have heard a girl, who had taken prizes in grammar at a high school, say, habitually, "You was," "You ain't," "I done," and scores of similar phrases, just because true education begins in the home, and not in the school.

If we seek our friends ambitiously, for the distinction their acquaintance can confer, and not for what they really are, vainly, indeed, should we preach the gospel of disinterestedness. If we strive to get the better of our neighbors in our bargains, will it avail anything when we exhort our children to love their neighbor as themselves? If we are harsh in our own judgments, how shall we enforce the blessed gospel of charity? If we are inconsiderate of the feelings of others, shall we, by precept, teach consideration to our children? or, if we are careless of the truth, is it by exhor-

tation that we can persuade our observant little ones to be truthful? And if, for the sake of the children whose gospel we are, we strive to regulate our lives by the Higher Law, shun what is unworthy and seek what is best and noblest, thus shall a little child lead us up the Hill Difficulty, and within the Celestial Gates.

Above all, let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that these little ones who surround us do not understand what we really are. They could not put it into words, perhaps; but they know, they feel. I look back now, across the intervening years, and reconsider the verdicts of my childhood; and I believe that there was not one of those verdicts which the judgment of my riper years would not confirm. Those men and women who seemed to me then high-minded and true and noble,—I know them now for souls of whom the world was not worthy. Those whom I then perceived to be easy-going, careless of the higher law, living to please themselves,— I might judge them more leniently now, knowing how human it is to err; but the lacks and the qualities that my childish eyes discerned were really there,—I did not deceive myself.

There is no truth in the world more solemn than that our own lives are the gospel of our children,—a gospel that outweighs a thousand-fold any teaching with which our lips may contradict it. Thus, indeed, are the sins of the fathers visited upon the children, since we instruct them by what we *are*, and fashion their characters by the ceaseless and strenuous lesson of our daily lives.—*Louise Chandler Moulton, in "Childhood."*

A LETTER.

I was in hopes that some one else would take up the subjects discussed in "The Mothers' Council"; but, as no one seems disposed to do so, it seems to be left to me to present the other side of the question.

I remember hearing a wise and acute woman say that, when any one had committed a great mistake or been the victim of such a mistake, the thing important to guard against was not that mistake, but the opposite. He is secured from the evils caused by the one, but almost certain to commit the opposite error. Now this, it seems to me, is the position of parents who can remember being treated with severity unnecessary strictness, or even want of sympathy. The sort of weak indulgence of the parents of the present day seems a bad preparation for the inevitable trials of life.

Observe that I do not say that there should not be sympathy shown to children, but that it should be of the right sort. A child's little plans and pursuits should not be carelessly or roughly checked, for instance. Even when they seem foolish to an older person, if the child does no harm, and infringes on no one's rights, he should be allowed to amuse himself as he pleases within reasonable bounds. Children often suffer injustice here. Because their games and toys seem silly to older people or "too childish for their age," grown-up people hinder or check them, when such interference should be kept for something really harmful.

The sort of indulgence which is hurtful is that which weakens the habit of obedience or infringes on the rights of others. And this is seen so frequently that it may be called the rule, not the exception. An anecdote has just appeared in a recent periodical of a lady who, being at some summer resort, left it, and went home, preferring the heat and dust of the city to the ruffianly behavior of the children of her aristocratic neighbors, the residents of surrounding cottages. Another lady, an acquaintance of mine, who had a seashore cottage, once let some rooms in it to a family who had two children. The mother, on arriving, coolly remarked, "You know *my* children are *real children*." It proved that she meant by this that she should not undertake to control them in the least. While she sat on the piazza, the children marauded all over the house, playing all manner of spiteful, mischievous tricks, and enacting the part of highwaymen to other children and nuisances to older people. When advised to send the whole party home, the hostess said she feared to give offence. But she added that she had heard that the grandfather of these children was a very strange character, and she thought perhaps the boy (who seemed to be the worse of the two) might have inherited depraved tendencies from him. It seemed a pity that the mother could not have heard this conversation. She probably, in her selfish indifference, was perfectly un-

conscious how her children seemed to other people.

Mrs. Hunt, in the article quoted in the January *Cheerful Letter*, says:—

"Why must I? or Why may not I? says the child. Because I say so, and I am your father, has been the stern authoritative reply ever since we can any of us remember." It is a common error to attribute to "everybody" the personal experience of one; but I think there is no doubt that there is a great deal too much "Why?" and also a great deal too much "Because," and one is as bad as the other. No parent should answer "Because" to a "Why," when giving a command. Of course, it is not necessary that everything a parent says should be a command; but, *when it is*, the order should be obeyed with the promptness with which a soldier obeys a captain. We are all familiar with the unpleasant snarling whine of the spoiled child's "Why must I?" and the equally disagreeable "Because" of the parent, sometimes irritable, sometimes weak and "mushy," often leading to a long wrangle, in which the child receives a thorough lesson in ill-temper, disrespect, and wilfulness, as much as if that were the primary object of the parent, and too frequently ending in his getting his way at last. It is customary to speak of mothers as if by the mere fact of their maternity they acquired qualities almost supernatural. But a woman who is not sensible and intelligent before she has a child to cope with is not likely to be inspired at the difficult moment. And to witnesses of her feeble inefficiency the spectacle is more mortifying than admirable.

If, when the boy of eight or ten, accustomed to fight off his mother's orders, and to do so with impunity, were told, "John, sit down in that chair, and do not speak again until I give you leave. Be silent," and if this were done every time he says, "Why?" how much discomfort, bad temper, and wasted time would be saved! The punishment need not be *severe*, but it should be *certain*. The mother need not speak harshly, but with good-humored firmness. Let the boy remain silent for ten minutes, and then release him. Take some good opportunity later to say to him: "John, I don't like to punish you. I would a great deal rather you controlled yourself, as, indeed, I know you can, if you will. But if, when I give you an order, instead of cheerful and prompt obedience, I meet cross words and looks, I am obliged to punish you and to break up the habit. And, if I find that a slight and gentle punishment like this, intended as a reminder, is not enough, I shall have to try something more severe. But I hope it *will* be enough. You wish to be a good boy, I know, and want to correct your faults yourself. Now that you have begun to think about it, I hope I can leave it to you."

One such firm and prompt yet gentle action will do more than hours of argument every day for ten weeks.

Sister Constance.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER.

LENT.

This month the season called Lent in the Christian Church begins. What is the best way to keep Lent? or is it, as some modern thinkers say, no use to keep it at all?

It seems to be very much like the Sunday question. We know that we ought to carry our religious life with us all through the week, and that a really religious man will not leave his religion behind him on Monday morning, but that all his work should be done better for it, and his friends, his business companions, his family, every one, will feel whether his religion is a part of his daily life or only something superficial and occasional. But, then, we all know that very, very few of us are able to give up our Sunday because we can make every week-day a Sabbath. If we dropped Sunday-keeping, it would not give us seven Sabbaths, but seven week-days. Some time we may be able to carry with us everywhere every day the sweetness and the calm of the Sunday, and to feel the presence of God every hour of our lives as our closest and dearest friend and companion. But to most of us how sweet and how necessary is that hour of prayer, that "seventh day,"—now the first day,—that daily reading! How it cools the fever and soothes the cares and gives rest for weariness! And so it seems pleasant and an opportunity to be prized that we are especially called and reminded to think more of the things of the spirit, and do seek every day—for this season, at any rate—that

greatest good which we wish we had sought every day of our lives. It will be all the better if we can form now permanent habits of daily prayer, of serious thought, of reading sacred books; but let us be grateful that we are called now, and not refuse the invitation.

Even those who cannot share in daily church services can have their own hour at home.

A pleasant way to keep Lent is to read a sermon by a good preacher every day. I have found Martineau's "Endeavors after the Christian Life" a good book for this purpose. Others are Robertson's sermons, and J. H. Thom's; Miss Cobbe's "Religious Duty" (this is not a book of sermons), "Every-day Religion," or "Self-culture" (J. F. Clarke). Then come the little books of devotional selections,— "Gold-dust," "Daily Strength for Daily Needs," "Prayers of the Ages," "Messages of Faith, Hope, and Love," Miss Cobbe's "Alone to the Alone." If we have none of these, we can take our hymn-book, choose a favorite hymn, and learn a verse by heart every day. Failing this, let us take our Bible and turn to the Psalms. Who has ever fully felt the beauty of these old Hebrew poems, which have been the best expression of religious experience,— faith, love penitence, adoration?

We may make this season a source of real help, so that the rest of the year we shall be better and stronger. We need not dwell upon our faults and failings, but seek directly the source of all strength.

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. L. F. C.

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.]

Famous Men in Disguise.

1. Hard-working brother.
2. Pleased the billions.
3. Always loyal.
4. Sang freedom's song.
5. Rustic bard.
6. Wit meets tenderness.

Famous Women.

1. Her books sell.
2. Girlish daring.
3. Much-admired lecturer.
4. Feminine nobleness.
5. Left many admirers. M. E. V.

Enigma.

We shining ones, just four in number,
More would our active band encumber,
Each other in a circle chase,
As if we strove to run a race.
First on the leg we wheel around,
And next upon the heel are found.
But, when we end the sport, we go
Upon the light, fantastic toe.
But I must not forget to say
We mingle foot-ball with our play.
Also, within the path we go
Your thankful feet will walk, I trow;
And now, in fathoming the marvel,
Do not the mystery unravel,
Or else the game we've played and won
Will prove time lost and work undone.

Conundrums.

1. Why is it easy to break into an old man's house?
2. Why is the letter *D* like a wedding ring?
3. Why are wheat and potatoes like Chinese idols?
4. Why should we never sleep in a railway car?
5. What kind of attention do you expect at a hotel?

Charade.

My first is a preposition,
  Consisting of letters two.
My second adds beauty to trees,
  To rocks and ruins, too.
My third is a thing unknown
  To the heart of a soldier brave.
My whole above, around us,
  Sleeping or waking, we have.

E. P. P.

Poetical Pi.

Who payph si eh norb dan hagtut,
  Tath shetver out stonhear liwl;
Showe romar si ish shoten hughtot,
  Dan lempsis thrut shi tosmut kills.

Answers to Puzzles in January Number.

Enigmas.

1. Shadow. 2. Smoke. 3. Needle. 4. Water.

Familiar Quotations.

1. Tennyson. 2. Patrick Henry. 3. Daniel Webster. 4. William Wordsworth. 5. Edward Everett. 6. Cowper. 7. Coleridge.

Charade.

Decoration.

GRASSHOPPERS IN WINTER.

Grasshoppers during the winter remain hidden among the grass and leaves in sunny and sheltered spots; and in such places on any mild day in winter, when the ground is free from snow, they may be found warmed into activity and hopping about in quite a lively manner. R. H.

Little wood-mice sometimes take up their winter quarters in old deserted bird's nests. I once found in a thicket of high blueberry bushes one which mousie had roofed and lined with thick soft moss. He was usually at home; but, whenever any one approached his dwelling with intent to call, he would very quietly slip out, and, dropping to the ground, would instantly disappear in the bushes. R. H.

An English gentleman living at Kingston, on the Thames, had a kitchen built on the banks of the river, and his servants made a pet of a frog which had his hole in the skirting; and this frog came out of his hole every evening for three successive winters to bask before the fire.

In some tropical countries during a season of continued heat and dryness many animals pass into a condition analogous to hibernation, called æstivation.

None know what it is to live till they redeem life from its seeming monotony by laying it a sacrifice on the altar of some great cause. There is more happiness in one such hour than in dwelling forever with the beautiful and grand, which Angelo's chisel has redeemed from the "marble chaos" or the pencil of Raphael has given to immortality.—*Wendell Phillips.*

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, on Friday, February 3, at 10.30 A.M. All interested in the work are cordially invited to be present.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

Pre-eminently, the religion of Jesus is the religion of love,—love to God and love to man. In the teaching of Jesus the love of God and the love of man are inseparable. They are notes that blend in a single chord: they are colors that mingle in a single ray. They are the systole and diastole of one heart.—*Philip Moxom.*

DIRECTIONS.

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